

REMARKS

This Amendment, submitted in response to the Office Action dated May 8, 2003, is believed to be fully responsive to each point of rejection raised therein. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration on the merits is respectfully requested.

As a preliminary matter, the Examiner has objected to claims 27-29 and the figures for including informalities. Proposed claim corrections are set forth hereinabove, and proposed drawing corrections are submitted herewith.

Turning to the merits of the Office Action, claims 1-30 are all the claims pending in the application. Claim 7 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claim 7 is amended as set forth herein to address this matter without narrowing the scope of the claims. Claims 1-6, 10-12, 14-15, 21-24, 26-27 and 30 have been rejected as being unpatentable over patent references issued to Eisemann, Weekstrom, and Latta, taken alone or in combination. Claim 7-9, 13, 16-20 and 25 have been deemed to describe allowable subject matter but are objected to for depending on rejected base claims.

To expedite prosecution of the case, the allowable subject matter of claims 7 and 15/19 have been incorporated into independent claims 1 and 11, respectively. Applicant further cancels claims 7, 10, 15 and 19 without prejudice or disclaimer and rewrites the dependencies of claims 16 and 18.

In view of the above, claims 1-6, 8-9, 11-14, 16-18 and 20-30 are in condition for allowance and should be passed to issue at the earliest possible time. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview,

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No. 09/647,458

the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

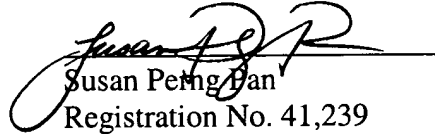
Respectfully submitted,

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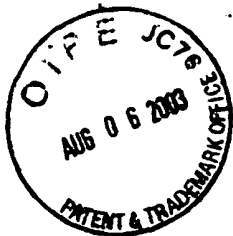
WASHINGTON OFFICE

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Date: August 6, 2003



WO 99/51968

Appl. No. 09/647,458
Docket No. Q61067
Amdt. Dated August 6, 2003
Reply to Office action of May 8, 2003
Annotated marked-up Drawing

PCT/F199/00288

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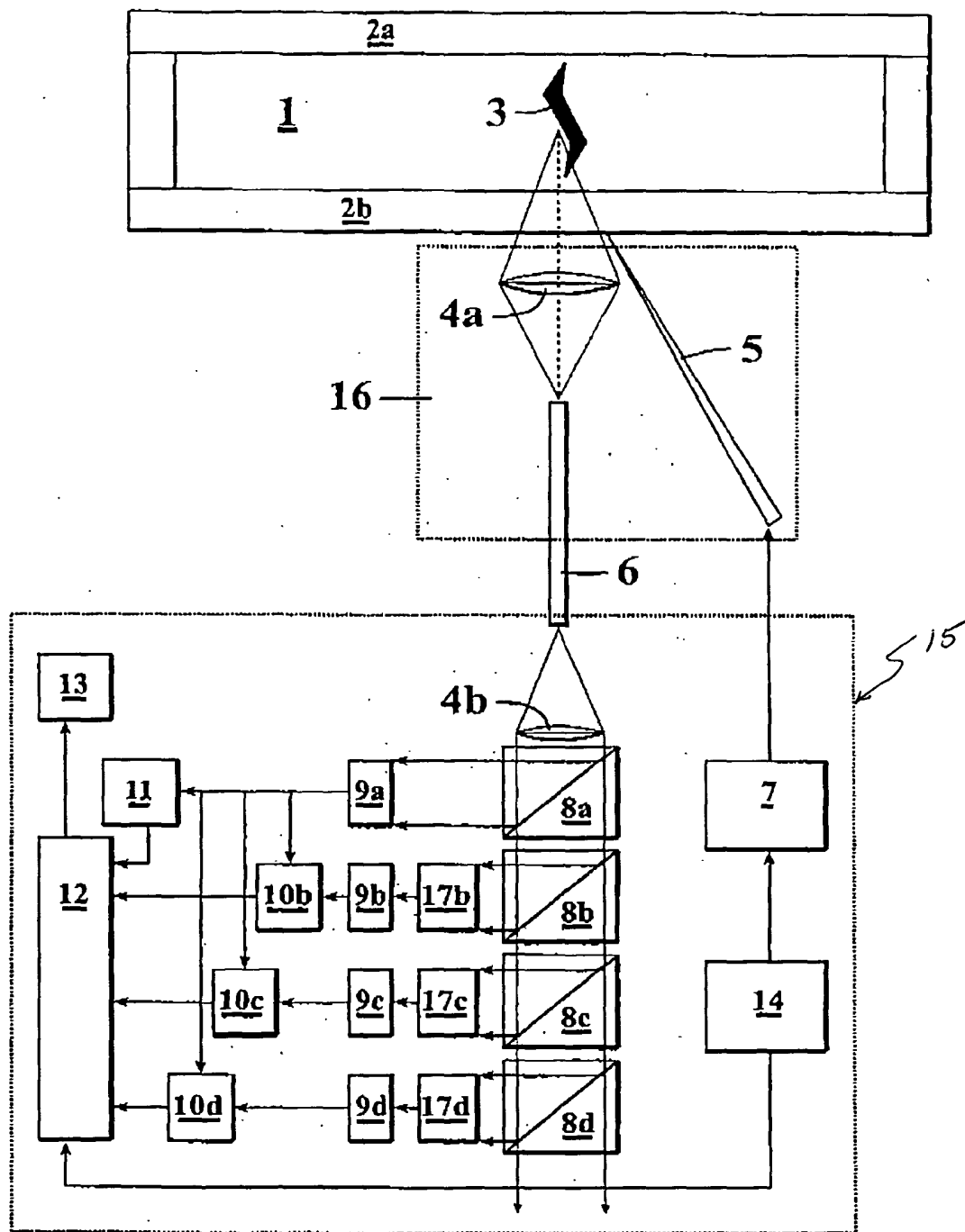


Fig. 1

SUBSTITUTE SHEET (RULE 26)